

Abstract

In conventional transactions between firms, it is difficult to make objective, quantitative evaluations in advance of firms with which no past transactions have been performed or of the quality of items supplied by a supplier firm with which few transactions have been made. Thus, a firm will not necessarily be able to negotiate with a firm that can supply high-quality items. As a result, a purchasing firm may not be able to purchase high-quality items efficiently, leading to increases in production costs and shipping details. Also, product quality may be lowered because high-quality items could not be obtained. When global purchasing is to be performed, the majority of negotiations will be with firms with which there have been no past transactions. Thus, there is a need for a system that allows efficient purchasing of high-quality products.

An inter-firm transaction mediation site is set up on the Internet. A quality calculation program is provided over a network to firms desiring transactions. The quality calculation program evaluates product quality in terms of "product specifications" and "production plant conditions," and a product quality evaluation estimate is made based on these evaluation results. As a result, firms desiring inter-firm transactions can calculate indices indicating quality of the item involved in the transaction as well as indices indicating the capability levels relating to quality achievement for the item involved in the transaction. These can be used as desired transaction conditions.